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Adventures in Salad Making

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Adventures in Salad Making

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Want to perfect the art of salad making?

Wish YOU could take foods you have in your refrigerator or cupboard, and turn out picture-pretty salads?

Tired of following detailed recipes for your family's salad fare?

Then read on -- this circular is just for you!

Those interested in directions for specific salads are referred to the many recipe sources--papers, magazines, and cookbooks. But for those who prefer to use their own ingenuity and current supplies, here are a few guides to help them earn the title of MASTER SALADMAKER.

TASTY, GOOD-FOR-YOU SALADS

Good taste, appearance, and nutrition go hand in hand when we choose salad ingredients wisely. The salad bowl has no nutrition magic. But it can do wonders, when properly chosen vegetables and fruits make their appearance. Be sure you add lots of food high in nutritive value. Use:

Dark green spinach leaves, broccoli bits, carrot cubes, and deep green lettuce and cabbage for high values of Vitamin A.

Serve large portions of orange, grapefruit, cantaloupe, and strawberries to increase the family asorbic acid intake.

Though salads are good for us they still do not take the place of vegetables in the family menu. Don't follow the restaurant lead of salad or vegetable--plan for both for the best nutrition.

Hearty main-dish salads add protein when generous amounts of cheese, egg, fish, or meat are used.

Weight Watcher's Delight

Salads are a joy to the person who must watch his weight. Nowhere else can we have such flavor treats for so few calories. Large vegetable or fruit salads are filling, flavorful, and contain few calories -- IF -- low calorie dressings are used. Most salad dressings are relatively high in calories. Some are downright loaded! Weight watchers must avoid dressings made with large amounts of oil. Recipes for low calorie dressings are printed in the recipe section. Commercially prepared brands are available on the grocery shelf.

VARIETY IS IMPORTANT

Variety adds zest to any activity, including the family mealtime. Even the best salad dressing or combination of ingredients ends in family resistance if served too often. Dare the unusual. Start by using one unfamiliar food in your salad. Try endive, young spinach leaves, or an unusual salad green. Experiment with new and different mayonnaises. Use herbs. Serve old favorites in a different form -- raw flowerlets of broccoli or tiny pieces of raw asparagus are delightful. Don't forget to plan for variety in color and texture, too. Remember how much better a bowl of cabbage slaw looks with a bit of green pepper or pimento to add extra color? Beware of too many colors or those that are not harmonious. Red cabbage, tomatoes, and radishes qualify as good combiners, but not necessarily with each other. Their colors clash!

TYPE OF SALADS

Most popular are salads of mixed fruits or vegetables. Other classifications include the so-called main dish salads. They feature generous servings of some protein food -- meat, cheese, fish, or eggs. Starchy bean or macaroni salads and potato salad are long time favorites. Gelatin based salads are good do-it-ahead items. Here are some general suggestions that apply to all varieties of salads.

THE THREE C's OF SALADMAKING

Clean

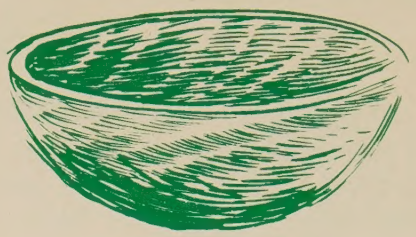
All ingredients served must be absolutely free from foreign material. But removing every bit of sand may be a problem. Certain greens are sometimes host to aphids and other insects.

Crisp

Limp greens or wilted celery never make an attractive salad! Wilted vegetables have lost a portion of their nutritive value along with their eye and taste appeal. Vitamins are not revived by the ice water bath that may perk up a wilted vegetable. So hasten the foods into the refrigerator after shopping. Place them on the table at the last possible minute so that they may be eaten at their chilly best.

HAVE YOU TRIED THIS?

Kitchen shears make quick work of mincing parsley, celery leaves, or fine herbs.



Season new wooden salad bowls by removing any finish from the inside of bowl and rubbing with vegetable oil. Wipe with damp cloth to clean. No soap or water, please!

Pierce the big end of egg shell with pin prick before hard cooking. This releases the air pocket and eggs won't crack so easily.

Wipe lip of salad dressing bottle before returning screw top. Dressing will stay "sweet" longer.

Up your salad's nutritional value by adding at least one Vitamin C rich food per salad. Cabbage, tomato, green pepper, orange, or grapefruit are good. Use cantaloupe and strawberries in season.

Try adding 1/2 teaspoon salt to china salad bowl before rubbing with garlic. Salt takes up flavor and results equal those of rubbed wooden bowl.

Greens mixed by rolling, rather than tossing, mix more easily without falling from the bowl.

Remove the heavy stringy ribs of celery with your potato peeler.

Colorful

Color is the saladmaker's best friend. Colorful food looks too good to miss. So visualize your salad and perk drab ones with a bit of color.

SPECIAL POINTERS FOR VEGETABLE SALADS

Wilted greens were probably the first tossed salad--hot vinegar on tender wild greens was a springtime favorite. Young leaf lettuce has almost replaced the wild greens and lengthened the time we can enjoy this treat. Young homemakers often fail to serve this salad because there are few recipes for it in modern cookbooks. Grandma "just made it." In this circular you will find a basic recipe for the dressing to start you on your way. But don't stop there--use different spices, more or less vinegar, and other ingredients as your fancy dictates.

For the ever popular tossed salad, head lettuce has become the favorite base. Its ready availability year round, tender crispness, and mild flavor will insure its continued popularity. Leaf lettuce adds a darker green color and a different texture. Some tasty varieties for the home gardener are bronze in color; others are shaped like oak leaves. Romaine and escarole are becoming familiar names. Try some when available at your local store. Use small amounts at first, increasing the amount as the family becomes used to the new flavor. Don't forget leftover green beans, peas, and asparagus stalks. Celery and carrots may be used either fresh or cooked. Raw broccoli, asparagus, and cauliflower are crunchy treats. One rule of thumb is to plan at least half of the tossed salad of base greens, then add radishes, onions, celery, eggs, cheese, etc., for variety.

The controversy over breaking versus cutting greens continues. Breaking greens is more time consuming but the shapes resulting are often worth the trouble. Advocates of breaking say the leaves bruise less and come to the table more crisp. Those favoring a knife insist that the time saved is considerable, and that interesting shapes can be cut as well as broken. Take your pick, but remember to have a variety of shapes--not geometric blocks--for your tossed salads.

Handling salad greens

Leafy vegetables spoil easily and require constant refrigeration. Large families who use a whole bunch of leaf lettuce or spinach quickly will want to wash the produce before storing. Small families will find that vegetables keep better if refrigerated unwashed. Handle greens this way:

1. Buy only highest quality produce.
2. Remove any unusable outer portion and store remainder in hydrator or plastic bag.
3. Avoid storing lettuce in same container as pears, apples, or cantaloupe. The ripening fruit gives off a gas that causes russet on the lettuce leaves.
4. Refrigerate as quickly after purchase or harvest as possible.
5. Prepare greens for use by washing in several changes of cool water. Use a stiff vegetable brush to scrub root vegetables and celery. Add 1 tablespoon salt per gallon water when washing tightly headed vegetables such as broccoli and cauliflower. Always lift greens from the water. Draining allows the freed grit to settle back on the leaves.
6. Be sure to dry greens and other salad materials. Dressings do not cling to wet greens. Lettuce cups will slip if they sit in a pool of liquid.

FRUITS MAKE WONDERFUL SALADS

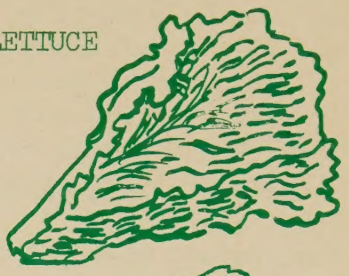
Fruit salads are universal favorites. They are a good choice to accompany a meal that already has a variety of vegetables as with a meat pie or stew. Fruits add pleasing contrast in texture and color. Their tart flavor helps pep up otherwise bland meals. Almost any fruit--canned, fresh, or frozen--can be used. The possible combinations are endless. The three C's of salad making--Clean, Crisp, Colorful--apply to fruits as well as vegetables. To them add these suggestions:

- Always drain fruit well on toweling before combining.
- Do not cut fruit into too small a piece.
- Everyone wants to recognize a bit of banana when he finds it!
- Avoid overmixing--fruits mash easily.

Very dark green leaves are excellent sources of Vitamin A. They also include significant amounts of calcium. Include them often in salad menus.

TRY THESE SALAD GREENS

LEAF LETTUCE



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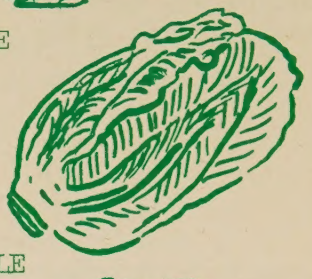
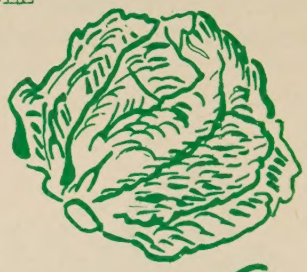
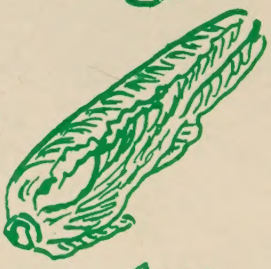
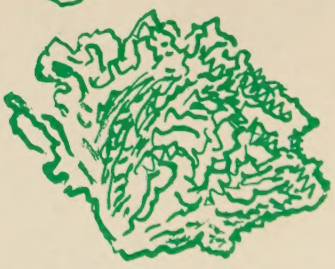


ESCAROLE



CELERY CABBAGE





CURLY ENDIVE OR CHICORY

WATERCRESS

Modern salads carry "that casual look." Elaborately arranged creations are passe.

Don't be a slave to lettuce. Try many greens.

Remove bottled French dressing from refrigerator early. It will be easier to "shake well before using" if the dressing is at room temperature.

- Use dressings sparingly or serve separately, allowing each person to serve himself.
- Consider arranging whole pieces of fruit for attractive salad plates.

Many fruits will turn dark when cut unless dipped into salt water or some acid. Start your mixed fruit salad by preparing either a citrus fruit or canned pineapple. Slice or cut bananas, apples, pears, and other fruits that turn dark directly into the dish. Toss gently but well. The fruit juices clinging to the pineapple, orange, or grapefruit will coat the other fruits and prevent them from turning dark.

MAKE-AHEAD GELATIN SALADS

The convenience of having the salad all made may account for the popularity of gelatin salads. Or perhaps it is the variety of color or the pretty shapes made possible by the interesting molds available. Whatever the reason, gelatin salads are real favorites.

Choose either the familiar unflavored gelatin or the fruit flavored gelatin dessert powders. Those preferring very tart flavors may wish to choose the former. The sweetened dessert powders are colorful and quick to use. Just be sure to use the one your recipe specifies.

Soak plain gelatin in liquid for a few minutes before trying to dissolve. This allows the gelatin to swell and prevents lumping. Follow recipes carefully.

Gelatin dessert powders dissolve in hot water. Flavor may be added by substituting fruit juice for part of the water called for in the recipe. Use no more than 1/2 cup of very heavy syrup from canned fruits per package of gelatin dessert. More sugar than this may prevent the gel formation. Use canned pineapple but avoid fresh pineapple in gelatin salads. Fresh pineapple contains an enzyme which prevents gelatin from setting. Fresh frozen pineapple or pineapple juices will also prevent gelatin setting.

One tablespoon (1 envelope) of plain gelatin makes 1 pint of gelatin base. About 2 cups of assorted fruits and vegetables may be added.

Pretty molds are available. Ask the volume before buying. Molds should be totally filled with the gelatin mixture. Many are too big for the average family. Before pouring the thickened gelatin into the mold, lightly oil the inside surface. Fill and allow to set.

To unmold: Wet the plate upon which you plan to arrange the salad. Submerge the mold in warm (not hot) water for a few seconds. Place plate on top of mold, hold firmly, and invert quickly. If the mold does not come away free, run a thin knife blade under the edge to release the air pressure. This usually releases the salad. Gently slide to the center of the plate and arrange greens or garnish around the base.

ADD DRESSING AND SERVE

No salad is complete without a tasty dressing to accent or help blend flavors. Grocery shelves display a wide assortment. Every cookbook has many special recipes. Basically there are three general classes of salad dressings:

French Dressings

These dressings are usually a combination of oil, vinegar, salt, pepper, and spices. Olive oil, prized by the gourmet, is expensive and full flavored. Americans usually use the less flavorful cooking oils. Vinegars may be cider or malt, flavored with herbs like Tarragon or wine. Special salad blends are available. Optional ingredients include tomato products, onion, garlic, sugar, and spices. Most basic French dressing recipes call for 3/4 cup oil to 1/4 cup vinegar. Many Oregonians prefer less oil, using only 2/3 cup oil to each 1/3 cup vinegar. Experiment until you find your family preferences. Consider diluting vinegar with water if you approach the 1/2 oil, 1/2 vinegar ratio. Otherwise, the salad may be too sour.

The easiest and most spectacular way to dress a tossed salad is to add oil, tablespoon at a time, tossing gently until the leaves

Seed grapes in a jiffy--use kitchen scissors to cut grapes in half, remove seeds with another snip or two.

Cook, cool eggs for salad this way: Cover eggs with cold water. Bring to boil; turn off heat. Cover, leave in water 15 to 20 minutes. Cool eggs promptly in cold water, to stop cooking and make shelling easier. Or simmer gently for 15 minutes--cool quickly.

For a new look to celery slices, cut stalks on the bias.

Stick small slices of garlic on toothpick when making salad dressing. Prevents garlic getting "lost" when time to remove it.

Cut a head of cabbage in half horizontally instead of vertically for tender salad leaves. Reserve the coarse stem portion for cooked cabbage dishes.

Household department or hardware stores carry items which speed salad making or make it more fun. Here are some favorites:

1. Miscellaneous salad bowls, forks, and spoons.

2. Special knives:
   - French knife for chopping;
   - Sharp pointed paring knife;
   - Long flexible bladed knife for easy peeling;
   - Serrated edge grapefruit knives.

3. Vegetable peeler.

   Two styles to choose from. One blade is parallel to handle; the other perpendicular. Both make short work of peeling carrots and potatoes.

4. Shredder.

   Many varieties and prices are available. Try those that have openings graded in size or adjustable blades. Keep blades sharp. Replace when shredder no longer cuts clean.

5. Garlic press.

   Choose those sturdily made.

6. Egg slicer.

glisten. Greens thus handled store well in refrigerator for a short time if dinner is delayed. Since vinegar and salt wilt the leaves, add these just before serving, tossing quickly. Add only enough vinegar to give a mild tart flavor.

Ready-mixed French-style dressings need only a quick shake before using. They separate readily, so work fast. Refrigerator storage keeps the dressings in good condition longer. Allow to return to room temperature before trying to "shake well before serving."

Mayonnaise Base Dressings

Familiar to all is the old standby--mayonnaise. A true emulsion of egg and oil, this semisolid dressing is flavored with spice, sugar, and acid, and has been a household favorite for years. Special flavors are rewards to those who take the time to make their own. But many excellent brands await the homemaker at the family grocery. Most mayonnaise require thinning before use. There are several suggestions in the box on the next page, but try your own, too. Use mayonnaise sparingly! Dressings should accent, not cover, the flavor of the salad materials. When storing, keep away from coldest areas of refrigerator for cold causes mayonnaise to separate. If separation does occur, beat an egg and add mayonnaise, a little at a time, beating well. Usually the emulsion can be reformed.

Salad Dressings

Flour or some other thickening agent is added to a mixture of egg, spices, and oil to form this dressing. Often it is cooked until thick. Salad dressings have a lower oil content and do not separate as easily as mayonnaise. Many cooked dressings fall into this general classification. Try those in the recipe section of your favorite cookbook. Use sparingly, thinning with cream, fruit juice, or tomato products if necessary. Or serve separately, allowing each person to choose the amount he prefers.

SERVING SALADS

The prettiest way to mix and serve a tossed salad is in a salad bowl. Choose one large enough to hold greens without crowding--then buy the next size larger! Hardwood is the favorite choice, though interesting plastics, glass, and pottery are gaining popularity. A bowl with deep sides and rounded bottom makes mixing easier. Most salad sets include a large fork and spoon, perfect for mixing the food without mashing. Small individual bowls are popular for salads served as a separate course. They can be used in place of the salad plate for dinner salads. When choosing bowls, consider appropriate size, shape, and color. Neutral colors which will harmonize with most foods are best.

Salad plates from china or pottery sets usually measure 7 inches or more in diameter. They often double for dessert plates. Modern narrow tables may dictate the use of the smaller 5-inch bread and butter plates to prevent overcrowding the table. If suitable plates are not available, attractive bowls or clear crystal plates are always in good taste.

For buffet service, individual salads are often arranged on large flat plates or trays. If a dressing of salt or vinegar is used, protect the surface of silver or aluminum trays by lining with clear plastic food wrap. Woven basket trays and wooden plates can be used when their surfaces are thus protected. Use wide, flat spatulas for serving.

7. Chopping board

   Elegant hardwood or simple utility board. Choose fine-grained wood, well sanded. Laminated hardwood does not warp and will last a long time.

8. Fancy molds

   Gelatin salads are more fun when molded in the many interesting shapes available. Remember that molds should be full, so choose one the right size for your family.

Easy Tricks with Mayonnaise

Vary prepared mayonnaise by:

1. Adding 1/3 cup pickle relish per cup mayonnaise.
2. Mixing 1/3 cup catsup or chili sauce with 1 cup mayonnaise.
3. Mashing 1 ripe banana, beating smooth with 2 T cream and adding to 1 cup mayonnaise.
4. Adding 2 T concentrated frozen orange juice per 1 C mayonnaise.
5. Adding 2 T apricot nectar per 1 C mayonnaise.
6. Adding 1/3 C crushed pineapple per C mayonnaise.
7. Adding 1 T vinegar, 1 T sugar, dash salt and pepper, to 1 cup mayonnaise.

SALAD DRESSING RECIPES

Basic French Dressing

(Most simple of all dressings. Try on a mixture of cucumber, avocado, and crisp lettuce.)

1 T vinegar
3 T oil
1 t salt
Few grains pepper
Mix by shaking

Poppy Seed Dressing

(Prized for use on grapefruit and orange salads.)

1 t dry mustard
1 t salt
1/2 C sugar
1 T grated onion
1/2 t poppy seeds
1/3 C vinegar
1 C salad oil

Mix mustard, salt, and sugar. Add other ingredients and pour into pint jar. Shake well before using. Keeps indefinitely in refrigerator.

French Dressing Supreme

(A favorite tomato catsup dressing that doubles nicely for marinating meat.)

1 small onion, grated
1 clove garlic
1/2 C sugar
1/3 C salt
2 t Worchestershire sauce
1 t paprika
1 C vinegar
2 C salad oil

Grate onion fine. Peel garlic and cut into thirds. Add all other ingredients and beat well. Allow to stand for 3 days, or until sufficient onion and garlic flavor is developed. Sieve onion and garlic. Store in refrigerator until used.

SOUR CREAM FAVORITES

Sour Cream

(An easy do-it-yourself sour cream)

1 pint coffee cream (20%) or
1/2 pint whipping cream diluted w/
1 C homogenized milk
5 t cultured buttermilk

Put cream into bowl, add buttermilk, and stir well. Allow to stand in warm place (70-80° F.) for 24 hours. Texture improves if refrigerated for another day.
Note: Heat cream to 100° to pasteurize if using own cream. Raw cream sometimes spoils before thickening.

Economy Sour Cream Dressing

(Excellent for cabbage salad, low in calories)

1/2 t dry mustard
1/2 t salt
2 t sugar
Dash Cayenne pepper or Tabasco sauce
1 C undiluted evaporated milk
1 T vinegar

Blend seasonings with evaporated milk. Add vinegar gradually, stirring until thickened. Makes one generous cup.

LOW CALORIE DRESSINGS

Zero Dressing

(Quick, easy and almost no calories)

1/2 C tomato juice
2 T lemon juice or vinegar
1 T onion, finely chopped
Salt and pepper

Chopped parsley or green pepper, horseradish or mustard, etc., may be added if desired. Combine ingredients in a jar with a tightly fitted top. Shake well before using.

Cooked Salad Dressing

(Popular with weight watchers)

1 1/2 T butter or margarine melted
2 T flour
1 t sugar
1 t salt
1 t mustard
Few grains Cayenne pepper
3/4 C skim milk
1/4 C vinegar
1 egg

Mix the dry ingredients; add egg slightly beaten, melted butter, and milk; then very slowly add the vinegar. Cook in top of double boiler until mixture thickens. Cool.

FOR THE BLUE CHEESE ENTHUSIAST

French Style Blue Cheese Dressing

(Gourmet dressing for greens)

1/2 C salad oil
3 T vinegar (3 to 5 T)
1 t prepared horseradish
1 t chopped chives or onion
2 oz. blue or Roquefort cheese
1/2 t salt
Few grains pepper

Combine oil, vinegar, horseradish and onion. Shake well; just before serving, crumble cheese and add.

Buttermilk Blue Cheese Dressing

(Have the recipe handy--you'll have requests.)

1 C buttermilk
2/3 C mayonnaise
2 T salad vinegar
1/4 C blue cheese
Dash salt and pepper

Combine and chill.

Creamy Blue Cheese or Roquefort Dressing

(Have plenty for salad and baked potatoes)

1/2 pint commercial sour cream
1 C cream, whipped
2 oz. blue or Roquefort cheese, crumbled into small pieces

Combine sour cream and whipped cream, stirring to a smooth consistency. Add generous bits of blue cheese.

Serve over greens or as topping for baked potatoes.

Favorite Salad Garnishes

Add an accent of color and interest by:

- Thin pepper rings
- Whole radishes, fanned
- Tomato wedges
- Olive and pickle cross sections
- Pomegranate seeds

Fruit Juice Dressing

1 t grated orange or lemon rind
1 C fruit juice made from:
- 1 lemon
- 1 orange
- pineapple juice or
- juice from fresh or canned fruit (about 1/3 C)

1/2 C sugar
1/8 t salt
3 T flour
1 egg or 2 yolks (slightly beaten)
2 T butter

1. Measure lemon and orange juice, and add enough fruit juice to make 1 C juice.
2. Mix sugar, salt, and flour. Add to fruit juice.
3. Cook until thickened. Add a small amount to the slightly beaten egg or yolks. Stir this into the remaining hot mixture.
4. Return to heat and cook slowly with stirring to cook egg in the mixture.
5. Remove from heat and add butter.
6. When the dressing is cold, whipped cream may be folded into it.

Fruit Salad Delight

1 No. 303 can pineapple tidbits
1 can mandarin oranges
1 C coconut, shredded
1/2 C small marshmallows
1/2 pint sour cream

Drain pineapple and oranges. Reserve enough orange slices for garnish. Combine all ingredients, mixing gently but completely. Let stand for at least 4 hours to blend flavors.

WHEN YOU FEED THE CROWD

Tomato French Dressing

Sift together: 3/4 C sugar
1 t celery salt
1 t dry mustard
1 t salt
1 t paprika
1 t black pepper

Add to 1 cup catsup, 1 1/2 T tomato sauce:

1 1/2 C oil
1/4 C vinegar
1/4 C water
Juice of 1 lemon

Add overnight and then remove:

1/2 onion
1 clove garlic, sliced

One quart is enough for 50 servings of tossed salad. Recipe can be doubled or trippled, if desired.

Wilted Lettuce

Select young tender leaves of lettuce, spinach, or wild greens. Wash, drain, and heap into salad bowl. Add green onions, sliced thin. Just before serving, pour the following hot solution over the greens:

4 strips bacon
2 or 3 T vinegar
1/2 t dry mustard
1 t sugar
Salt and pepper
1 or 2 hard-cooked eggs

Fry bacon until crisp. Remove and crumble over greens. Pour off part of grease, reserving 4 T in skillet. Add other ingredients. Bring to boil. Add other seasonings as desired. Pour on greens and toss to mix. Garnish with egg wedges. Serve immediately.

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